

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common throughout the world. These viruses can live in animals, such as camels, cats and bats, and at times, evolve and infect people, before spreading through human to human contact. Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold—through the air by coughing or sneezing; through close personal contact, like touching or shaking hands; by touching an object or surface with the viruses on it; and occasionally, through fecal contamination. This has occurred previously with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks.

WHO DOES THE ISSUE IMPACT?

People most at-risk of contracting a coronavirus are those who have traveled to places where the virus is occurring. In the case of the novel coronavirus, that location is China, and particularly the Wuhan area and the Hubei province.



WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The department frequently exercises and prepares for a potential infectious disease outbreak. We have been monitoring the coronavirus outbreak in China using information from our federal and local partners and are preparing our response teams in case of an outbreak here. We have talked with health care partners about the potential spread of the coronavirus into the United States and how they will work with public health to evaluate potential cases.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of the 2019-nCoV can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **Contain**- if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

The latest information on the coronavirus in the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the [CDC website](#)

Additional information from the CDC on what to do if you are sick can be found [here](#)

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What you need to know about 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

What is 2019 novel coronavirus?

The 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a new virus that causes respiratory illness in people and can spread from person to person. This virus was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get 2019-nCoV?

The 2019-nCoV is spreading from person to person in China and limited spread among close contacts has been detected in some countries outside China, including the United States. At this time, however, this virus is NOT currently spreading in communities in the United States. Right now, the greatest risk of infection is for people in China or people who have traveled to China. Risk of infection is dependent on exposure. Close contacts of people who are infected are at greater risk of exposure, for example health care workers and close contacts of people who are infected with 2019-nCoV. CDC continues to closely monitor the situation.

Have there been cases of 2019-nCoV in the U.S.?

Yes. The first infection with 2019-nCoV in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of infection with 2019-nCoV in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does 2019-nCoV spread?

This virus probably originally emerged from an animal source but now seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some viruses are highly contagious (like measles), while other viruses are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

Patients with 2019-nCoV have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled to China and got sick?

If you were in China within the past 14 days and feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, you should seek medical care. Call the office of your health care provider before you go and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against 2019-nCoV. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for 2019-nCoV. People with 2019-nCoV can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



What to do if you are sick with 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

If you are sick with 2019-nCoV, or suspected of being infected with 2019-nCoV, follow the steps below to help prevent 2019-nCoV from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Do not use public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people in your home

As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have 2019-nCoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, immediately clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Clean your hands

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., shortness of breath or difficulty breathing). **Before** seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, 2019-nCoV infection. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed 2019-nCoV infection should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. Current information on 2019-nCoV is limited; thus, home precautions are conservative and based on general recommendations for other coronaviruses, like Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS).

